



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/666,325 09/21/00 ARMBRUST

D BU9-98-110 D

EXAMINER

MMC2/0102

MCGINN & GIBB PC
SUITE 100
1701 CLARENDON BLVD
ARLINGTON VA 22209

KANG, D
ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2811
DATE MAILED:

01/02/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/666,325

Applicant(s)

ARMBRUST ET AL.

Examiner

Donghee Kang

Art Unit

2811

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-14 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 15-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. & 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 17) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2.
- 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 20) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

1. Receipt is acknowledged of the Pre-Amendment filed September 21, 2000

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims **15-16 and 19-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Brady et al (US 5,633,047).

4.

Regarding claim **15**, Brady et al discloses a semiconductor device having at least two levels of interconnecting metallurgy, said semiconductor device comprising (Fig.4):

a first level of substantially silicide free metallurgy (20); and an uppermost layer of metallurgy (22 & 24) including a bonding pad, wherein a top of said uppermost layer comprises a silicide surface (32). See Col.4, lines 22-36 and Col.6, lines 46-55.

Regarding claim **16**, Brady et al discloses interconnecting metallurgy comprising copper (22).

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Regarding claim **19**, Brady et al discloses the semiconductor device further comprising one of a lead and tin solder (34) terminal electrically connected to said silicide surface.

Regarding claim **20**, Brady et al discloses the semiconductor device further comprising a silicon nitride (8) layer physically connected to said silicide and including an opening allowing direct electrical contact with said silicide surface.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 17-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brady et al.

Regarding claim **17**, Brady et al discloses uppermost layer is cleaned prior to formation of silicide surface (Col.4, line 55). Prior art does not expressly teach the method of cleaning of uppermost layer by applying one of the ammonia plasma and the hydrogen plasma.

This is considered a product-by-process limitation. "Even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production.

If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior the prior product was made by a different process". *In re Thorpe*, 777F. 2d 695,698 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985). See also MPEP 2113. Moreover, an old or obvious product produced by a new method is not a patentable product, whether claim in "product by process" claim or not.

It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to form claimed structure, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the shape of a component. A change in shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose*, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

Regarding claim 18, Brady et al does not teach the silicide surface comprises a top 10% to 20% of a thickness of uppermost layer.

Selection of thickness or concentration of various layers in device is an obvious design choice, therefore held within ordinary skills in the art.

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Conclusion

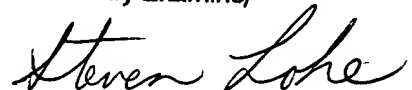
7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Donghee Kang** whose telephone number is 703-305-9147. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Thomas can be reached on 703-308-2772. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-7722 for regular communications and 703-308-7722 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0956.

DHK
December 21, 2000

Steven Loke
Primary Examiner

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven Loke".